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# Achieving the Gold Standard: How Exceptional Customer Service Creates Family Friendly Schools

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**Presenters**

Katy Gunter, Pam Pajerski, Natalie Sanfilippo, Jennifer Williams, Todd Smith, and Daisy Tremps

# Achieving the Gold Standard:

*How Exceptional Customer Service  
Creates Family Friendly Schools*



National Youth at Risk Conference  
Savannah, Georgia  
March 4, 2015

# Welcome!

- Pam Pajerski - Principal, Cumming ES
  - Katy Gunter - Parent Involvement Coordinator, Cumming ES
  - Natalie Sanfilippo - Title I Lead, Cumming ES
  - Jennifer Williams - Quality Work Facilitator, Cumming ES
  - Todd Smith - Principal, Midway ES
  - Daisy Tremps - Parent Involvement Coordinator, Midway ES
- 
- Purpose: *To learn from the best practices of two award winning Title I schools and the Ritz Carlton to ensure that all parents are welcomed into their schools. Through small, but influential changes, we will begin making education work for all Georgians.*

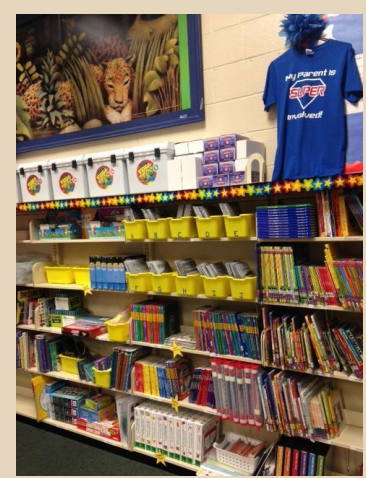
# What is the Family-Friendly Schools Partnership Award?



- Annual awards that recognize Title I schools for their exceptional commitment to fostering welcoming environments that encourage families to become active partners in improving student achievement and success
- Timeline
- Mock Walk-Throughs
- Four factors are considered when assessing a school's welcoming environment:

# Physical Environment

- “The physical appearance of the school building and surrounding areas such as the main entrance, halls, parking lots, signage and landscaping”



Physical Environment



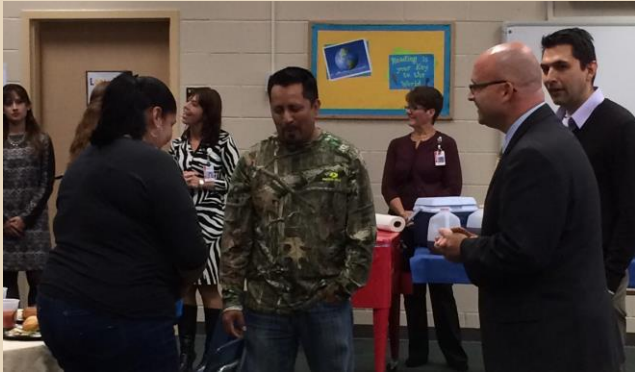


Physical Environment



# Personal Contact

- “The visible interactions between school staff and families and/or community members, such as acknowledging parents or guests in the school, friendly greetings from front office staff, or public recognition for parents and community members who volunteer and contribute to school and student success”



1. Make & Take: Craft Sticks Ten Frames (Number sense)  
 2. Subitizing Cards on Ring (Number sense & subitizing)

4. Name at least one part of the evening that made you smile:  
 The teachers in the Domino Parking lot were super friendly and interactive. They made my children feel comfortable, welcomed and confident!

5. Name at least one part of the evening that could be improved:  
 We couldn't quite hear the announcements. It was hard to tell the difference in color of the dot plate examples.

6. We plan to host our Parent University in May. List any topic you would be interested in hearing

## Personal Contact



Personal Contact

# Communication

- “The way that the school keeps families and the community informed through sources such as a welcome letter, up-to-date school calendar of events and holidays, a staff directory, announcements on social media websites or a school map for visitors. Information for parents should be provided in various languages and should be easy to understand”



# Cougar Chronicle



Cumming Elementary School

February 6, 2015

## Upcoming Events

Feb. 16

No School for  
Students/ Professional  
Learning for Teachers

Feb. 18

Spirit Wear  
Wednesday

## Did You Know...?

**100% of our teachers are highly qualified!!** This means that our teachers are professionally certified to teach by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. In general, teachers must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education and hold a valid Georgia Teaching Certificate. 31% of CES teachers hold a bachelor's degree, 44% have obtained a Master's degree, and 25% have earned their Specialist's degree.

## Kindergarten Roundup



[Home](#)  
[About](#)  
[Contact](#)  
[CES Title I Information](#)  
[Title I Events](#)  
[Ways to Be Involved](#)  
[Classes in the Community](#)  
[Parent Resources](#)  
[Academic Support Websites](#)  
[Parent Involvement Articles](#)  
[Parent Feedback](#)  
[Blog](#)

## Cumming Elementary

### Online Parent Resource Center



Welcome to Cumming's OPRC! Thank you for stopping by. We hope you find this website a valuable source of information to help in supporting your child's academics. Check back often to find wonderful videos, articles, and tools to ensure your child succeeds to his or her highest potential!

## Cumming Elementary School

Posted by Katy Gunter [?] · February 18 at 3:19pm ·

2/18/15 11:30 am Update: As of right now Forsyth County Schools is planning to hold school on Thursday, February 19. As always this may change based on the weather and power at our schools (currently all have power), however we wanted you to know our plans at this point so you could plan accordingly. We know that there are homes without power, but there is much improvement over yesterday and we look for more to be restored throughout today. We will continue to monitor conditions throughout today and tomorrow morning, so please visit our website and social media for updates.

266 people reached

Like · Comment · Share · 13 2

Norma R. de Islas, Panos Jordan, Alma Rioo and 10 others like this.

Cumming Elementary School \*\*Since Forsyth County Schools post everything first, make sure you frequently check their homepage for the most updated info: [www.forsyth.k12.ga.us](http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us). CES FB and Website will post information, too, but not as immediately as the county will 😊

Forsyth County Schools / Overview

FORSYTH.K12.GA.US

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · Commented on by Katy Gunter [?] · February 18 at 3:38pm

Cumming Elementary School **NOTA: LOS PLANES DE FCS PARA SOSTENER LA ESCUELA EN JUEVES, 19 DE FEBRERO**  
 18/02/15 11:30 Actualización: A partir de ahora las Escuelas del Condado de Forsyth tiene previsto celebrar la escuela el jueves 19 de febrero, como siempre que esto puede cambia... See More

Like · Reply · Commented on by Katy Gunter [?] · February 18 at 4:17pm

facebook



# Communication



Communication

# School Practices and Policies

- “The opportunity for families and community members to provide feedback, actively contribute by serving on committees that address policies and procedures, or participate in parent organizations that are inclusive of the entire school community”



Cumming Elementary's Title I Program Presents:

## Cultural Heritage Night & Parent Input Meeting



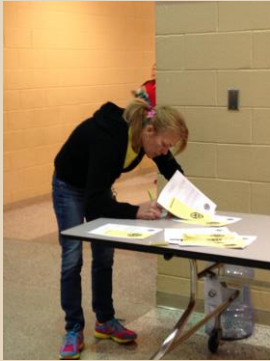
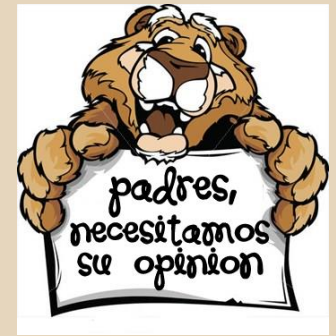
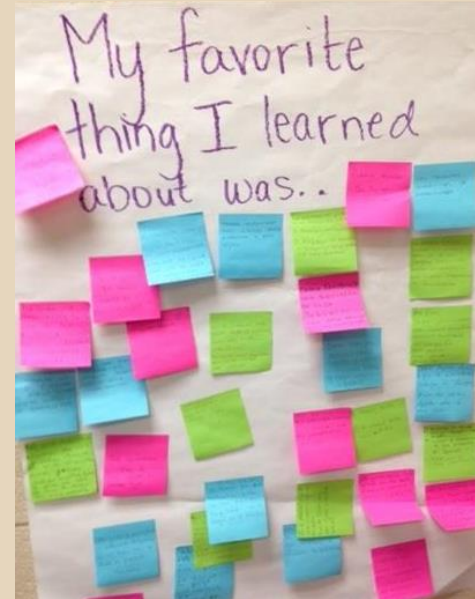
Thursday, May 15

5:00 – 7:00 PM

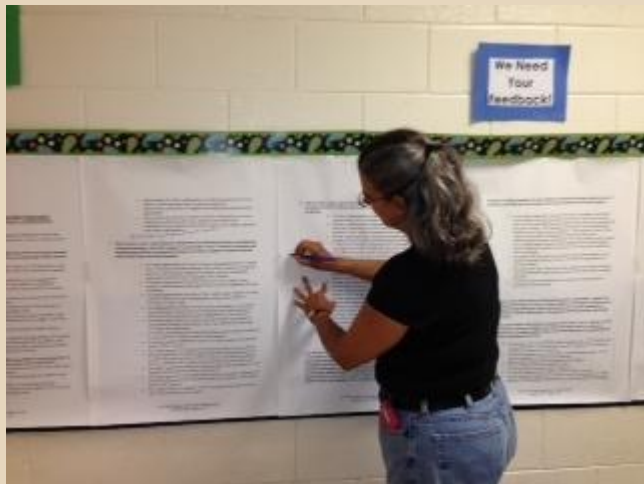
**Parents** – We need your input – Help us plan for the 2014 – 2015 School Year. Earn up to three red tokens for your participation.

**Families** – Show off where you're from and see all the Cultures of Cumming!

**Kids** – Have fun experiencing different cultures!



School Practices and Policies



School Practices and Policies

# Midway Elementary





PRESENTATION

Creating Welcoming Environments



## CREATING WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS



Poor Service  
Experiences

# What is your WORST customer service experience?

Actions

Feelings

# Creating Welcoming Environments



# What are the benefits of creating a welcoming environment?

- 
- 
- 
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- 



## CREATING WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS

- Make students want to learn
- Make parents want to participate and volunteer
- Make school staff enjoy their jobs
- Make community members want to invest in the school
- Improve parent-school communications
- Make the school a place of trust, safety, and resources to students, parents, and the community at large

## CREATING WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS

*“The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.”*

*Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide for Family-School Partnerships by Anne Henderson, Karen Mapp, Vivian Johnson, and Don Davies (2007)*

# CREATING WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS

for parents, students and the community

- General Service Principles
- Set the Stage
- Finish with a Flourish
- Workplace Manners



## GENERAL SERVICE PRINCIPLES

## IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Do not overcomplicate service
- The most important word in service is “always”
- Do not underestimate the importance of psychology in service
- Pick up on “tells” in order to connect with people quickly
- Take the initiative and practice one extra degree

# THE POWER OF “I”...

Taking personal ownership

The Story of...

## **Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody!**

There was an important job to be done and **Everybody** was sure that **Somebody** would do it. **Anybody** could have done it, but **Nobody** did it. **Somebody** got angry about that, because it was **Everybody's** job. **Everybody** thought **Anybody** could do it, but **Nobody** realized that **Everybody** wouldn't do it. It ended up that **Everybody** blamed **Somebody** when **Nobody** did what **Anybody** could have done.



## HANDLING SERVICE ISSUES....

...is an Art Form

- Let the individual vent
- Do not become defensive
- Use Appropriate body language
- Speak softly and be patient
- Ask open-ended questions
- If you hear it, own it
- Do not play the “Blame Game”
- Make the resolution fit the problem



SET THE STAGE

# FIRST IMPRESSIONS



- Strong impressions are made in the first five seconds of meeting someone
- People will judge you on your facial expressions, your grooming, gestures and even the way you sit or stand and carry yourself
- The language you choose also reflects upon your school
- How you say something is as important as what you say



WHO WOULD YOU RATHER WORK WITH?



## PROFESSIONAL GROOMING

Avoid anything exaggerated or overdone such as:

- Clothing & Jewelry
- Hairstyle & Fingernails
- Makeup, Cologne & Perfume

Your work attire should be:

- Appropriate... professional
- What message are you sending?

# What are the benefits of when employees are positive?

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# YOUR ATTITUDE IS CONTAGIOUS



- ✓ Increased productivity
- ✓ Protect your school's reputation
- ✓ Spread a positive attitude
- ✓ Have better safety records



# Fish Philosophy



# HOW YOU SAY SOMETHING IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU SAY



# What are some of the words and phrases to be avoided in the workplace and why?

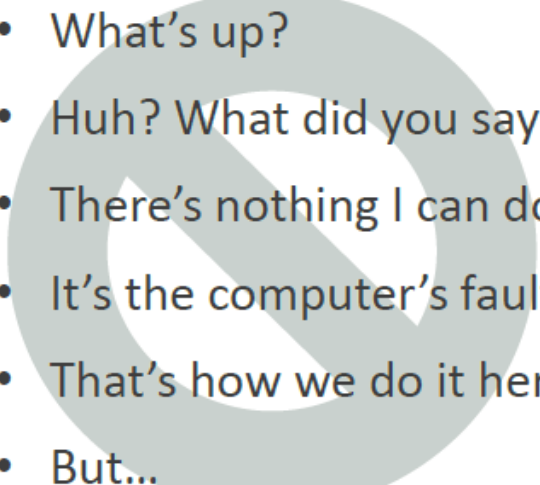
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## PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU SAY

What you **say** is  
also a reflection on  
your school and its  
mission

Please avoid...

- 
- What's up?
  - Huh? What did you say?
  - There's nothing I can do
  - It's the computer's fault
  - That's how we do it here
  - But...

## PROFESSIONAL RESPONSES

**That could never happen here!...**

I am so sorry you had that experience.

**You need to...**

Can you provide me with...

**It is school's policy...**

Let me see what I can do to help you.

## PROFESSIONAL RESPONSES

### **I don't know...**

Please allow me to find out for you.

### **No!...**

What I can do is...

### **Calm down!...**

I can see you are very upset...

### **That's not my job...**

I will find someone who can better assist you with...

## ALL FIVE SENSES





FINISH WITH A FLOURISH



# TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

are the building blocks to creating  
stakeholder loyalty and engagement



**SHOWING APPRECIATION**  
is another important building block to  
creating loyalty and engagement



## THE LAST IMPRESSION: ACTIVITY

- Is your last interaction as good as the initial impression?
- What elements are needed to create a lasting impression?

# What elements are needed to create a lasting impression?

Face-to-Face	
Telephone	

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## WORKPLACE MANNERS

## WHAT IS ETIQUETTE AND WHAT ARE MANNERS?



**“Etiquette** really is about treating people with consideration, respect, honesty and understanding.”

**“Manners** are the tools that will let you accomplish this with ease, simplicity and confidence.”

~ Peter Post –Business Etiquette Author

## ACTIVE LISTENING

- An important component of excellent customer service is active listening, which is a hard skill to master.
- What is **ACTIVE** listening?
- What are the reasons why we do **NOT** actively listen?
- What are the reasons why we **SHOULD** actively listen?





## ACTIVE LISTENING LEADS TO TRUST.

There are **3** magical words to connect quickly with people



**“TELL ME MORE”**

# WORKPLACE CONVERSATIONS

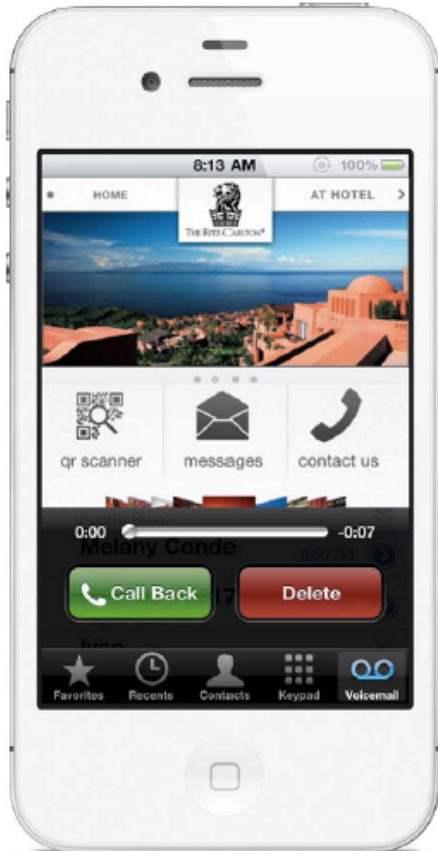
What topics are  
**not** appropriate  
to discuss at  
work?



## TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

1. Answer within three rings...and with a smile
2. Introduce yourself
3. Use your school and /or department name
4. Use the caller's name... if you have it
5. Ask permission to place a caller on hold and always offer additional assistance





## VOICEMAIL ETIQUETTE

Always keep in mind that voicemail is not private

- Speak slowly, clearly, keep it brief and to the point
- Leave your name and repeat your phone number twice
- Do not say it is urgent unless it is
- Provide the caller with an alternative on how to reach you
- Return calls within 24 hours

## SPEAKERPHONE ETIQUETTE

- Do not use a speakerphone to check your voicemail if others can hear it
- Only use a speakerphone for conference calls
- When you do use a speakerphone always introduce everyone in the room
- Always close doors for privacy
- Ask permission to place a call on a speakerphone if necessary



## Subject: EMAIL ETIQUETTE

- Be very, very careful – email is not private
- Use a salutation at the beginning and at the ending of the message
- Be concise, and to the point
- Do not use all caps as it appears that you are shouting
- Use proper punctuation and capitalization
- Enable automatic spell check and proof read
- Never send an email if you are tired, stressed or angry

Nothing will destroy your credibility quicker than if word gets out that you cannot be trusted with confidential information.







What is the  
most important  
thing you've  
heard today?

# Let's Tweet!



- Answer one of the questions using a Twitter account and less than 140 characters:
- What is the most important thing you've heard today?
  - One thing I learned is...
- What is something you might take back to your school?
  - I will take back...
- A challenge I have is...

#NYARgoldstandard



# Cumming Elementary





Questions



Thank You